

**STATEMENT OF C. BRUCE SHEAFFER, COMPTROLLER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION OF THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, CONCERNING H.R. 3286, TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY TO REIMBURSE STATES THAT USE STATE FUNDS TO OPERATE NATIONAL PARKS DURING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**November 21, 2013**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 3286, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to reimburse States that use State funds to operate National Parks during the Federal government shutdown, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3286 directs the Secretary of the Treasury to reimburse any State for funds expended for an activity conducted in FY 2014 during the government shutdown that was necessary to operate a national park located within the State. Reimbursement would be provided only for activities authorized under federal law and conducted in a manner and at approximately the same level in scope and cost as they would have been conducted by the Federal government.

From October 1 through October 16, 2013, the National Park Service, along with other bureaus and offices of the Department of the Interior, implemented a shutdown of our activities due to a lapse in appropriations. Under the closure determination and notice issued by the Director of the National Park Service, and consistent with applicable law, the National Park Service closed and secured all 401 national parks across the country, suspended all activities, and furloughed more than 20,000 National Park Service employees.

In response to the economic impacts that the park closures were having on many communities and local businesses, as the shutdown entered a second week, Secretary Jewell announced that the Department would consider agreements with Governors who indicated an interest and ability to fully fund National Park Service personnel to reopen specified national parks in their States. Six States – Arizona, Colorado, New York, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Utah – signed donation agreements with the Department to open a total of 13 park units that are all significant contributors to tourism in the States where they are located. State donations through these agreements totaled approximately \$3.6 million. Once these agreements were signed and the funds were transferred, the National Park Service reopened the national parks in accordance with the specific agreements.

Under the terms of the agreements, the States donated to the National Park Service lump sum payments in advance to cover the cost of operating the parks for a specific number of days. The employees who returned to work in these parks during the shutdown were paid for these days out of the funds donated by the States. When Congress passed a continuing resolution providing appropriations for the first three and a half months of FY 2014 on October 16, the National Park

Service was able to resume operations on October 17 and stop charging employee time against the funds that had been donated by the States.

Once the shutdown ended, the National Park Service immediately began the process of reimbursing the six States for the portion of donated funding that was not expended to operate the parks, which totaled approximately \$1.6 million. However, the National Park Service does not have the authority to reimburse States for the portion of funding that was expended; an act of Congress is needed for that. H.R. 3286 would provide that authority.

We estimate this legislation would cost the U.S. Treasury approximately \$2 million and would be subject to Pay-As-You-Go requirements.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.